DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 416 855 IR 018 757

AUTHOR	Leh, Amy S. C.; Gazda, Russ
TITLE	Elementary School Children Creativity: Video and Internet.
PUB DATE	1998-01-00
NOTE	7p.; Modified version of a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Visual Literary Association-IVLA (29th, October 1997).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Behaviorism; Cognitive Ability; Computer Assisted Instruction; Computer Literacy; *Computer Uses in Education; Constructivism (Learning); *Cooperative Learning; Educational Resources; *Electronic Classrooms; Electronic Mail; Elementary Education; Interactive Video; *Internet; Learning Activities; Multimedia Instruction; Online Searching; Online Vendors; Problem Solving; Telecommunications; Video Equipment; *Visual Literacy
IDENTIFIERS	Desktop Video; Digital Imagery; Digital Technology; Netscape; Video Production

ABSTRACT

This article reports on two academic courses related to visual literacy: Videology and the Internet. The two projects are examples of how young learners can be educated and prepared for a visual world via courses in visual literacy. The article provides an overview of the impact of television on American society, describes each project, discusses the course goals, the equipment used, and the instructional philosophy and methodology. The Videology course focused on the creation of video projects utilizing state of the art digital editing technology. The course introduced students to the theory and practice of desktop video production using camcorders, desktop computers, and software. The main goal of the Videology class was to teach students communication skills through the use of video. Instructional objectives included "learning to read, write, and communicate using correct video terminology"; "planning and producing short video programs that communicate effectively"; and "communicating messages and information to others using the language of visuals and sound while working cooperatively in teams." Objectives for the Internet course included: "creating a word document"; "sending and reading e-mail"; "scanning a picture"; "searching the net"; and "creating a webpage." For both courses, the instructional methodology encompassed a combination of techniques from repetitive tasks that needed to be memorized to intuitive methods of trial and error. The Internet course also involved several additional approaches which included "Behaviorists' methods" and "Constructivist's methods." This paper includes several graphs and pictures of the video projects created by students. (JAK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 416 855

Elementary School Children Creativity: Video and Internet

By:

Amy S.C. Leh

Russ Gazda

IR018757

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Amy S.C. Leh

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

IR

Elementary School Children Creativity: Video and Internet

Dr. Amy S. C. Leh and Russ Gazda

Abstract

This article reports on experience with two courses which are related to visual literacy, Videology and Internet. Course goals, equipment used, instructional philosophy and methodology, and course projects are described. Course observation findings are reported.

Overview

The advent of television caused changes in the American society. Within average American homes, it allowed young children frequently exposure to tremendous visual images. This fact initiated the visual literacy movement. Fransecky and Debes (1972) addressed the importance of visual literacy in their book, Visual Literacy: A Way to Learning - A Way to Teach.

Visual images can move an individual to "an internal activity [emotion] which does not realize information perceived from the outside world as such, but transforms it to be meaningful to the relation of the individual to the world" (Sava, 1981, p.11). Consequently, the individual can be stimulated and held by the emotion caused by the images (Mandel, 1967). Messaris (1994) stressed the importance of learning about visual conventions which "gives the viewer a foundation for heightened conscious appreciation of artistry; second, it is a prerequisite for the ability to see through the manipulative uses and ideological implications of visual images" (p. 165).

The following two projects are examples of how young learners can be educated and prepared to a visual world via courses - Videology and Internet. The two courses were extracurricular courses offeredat the Center for Academic Precocity at a large university in the United States. The classes met 2 1/2 hours in ten weekly sessions for a total of 25 hours. The subjects were young learners ranging in age from 8 to 13 years. During the spring of 1997, enrollment totaled 15 students in the Videology class and 12 in the Internet class.

Videology

The course focused on the creation of video projects utilizing state of the art digital editing technology. The course introduced students to the theory and practice of desktop video production. Through the use of camcorders, powerful desktop computers, and sophisticated software, professional-looking videos were created to communicate, inform, and motivate the viewer. Students participated in every aspect of video production, from storyboarding and scriptwriting to directing, shooting, and editing. Post-production included the creation of graphics and special effects. Students worked both individually and in small teams at various stages of the production process, utilizing videotape and the latest state of the art digital technology.

Course Goals

The main goal of the class was to teach young people good communication skills through the use of video. Instructional objectives included (1) learning to read, write, and communicate using correct video terminology, (2) planning and producing short video programs that communicate effectively,and (3) communicating messages and information to others using the language of visuals and sound while working cooperatively in teams.

Course goals fell into various realms. Visual literacy skills related to exercises based on seeing through the eye of the camera and telling a story using visual elements. Cognitive abilities were exercised through the use of correct video terminology and the need to work as a team on planning and executing production and solving production problems.

Equipment

The hardware used in the class consisted of a combination of consumer grade equipment such as camcorders and professional and semi-professional gear such as portable lighting kits, microphones, personal computers, and the Media 100 nonlinear editing system. Software included word processing programs for scripts and storyboards, and more intense applications such as Adobe Premiere, Photoshop, and the Media 100 editing interface.

Instructional Philosophy and Methods

Various instructional philosophies were employed in teaching this class. Videology was a broad based subject with many aspects worthy of attention. To successfully reach the learners, it was necessary to employ a wide variety of approaches to instructional theory. Some skills learned in the class involved repetitive tasks that needed to be memorized and performed with accuracy. Other skills were to learn more intuitively by trial and error methods. A combination of techniques were required for particular problems that involved multiple factors.

Implementing the course required philosophy in action. Behaviorism figured into the component of the class concerned with rote learning, such as teaching the basics of equipment set-up and operation. Using the rules of picture composition for proper framing such as the Rule of Thirds was another example of this philosophy in action.

Cognitive learning, which was concerned with higher order thinking and problem solving, was encountered in the proper use of lighting, camera angles, and basic editing techniques. Here there were technical and creative decisions to be made which need to work in agreement.

Constructivism, currently a very popular teaching style, was used to allow the students to explore those components of the course in which there were no simple right and wrong answers. Class activities in this mode involved the use of digital video software, the creation of unique story themes, and the investigation of music and sound effects used to enhance a production.

Projects

The goals of this course were realized in the projects assigned along the way. The projects varied in intensity from simple camera exercises designed to make the student aware of the power of visual perspective to the complex procedure of editing an entire program to achieve an effect. Most projects required cooperation between two or more individuals working as a team. The physical requirements of production such camera operation, sound monitoring, acting, and directing obviously could not be accomplished simultaneously by a single person.

Project Categories

Project ideas were constantly being created and older ones were evolving. Some successful themes were news event reports/interviews, commercials/infomercials, documentaries, talk shows, dramatic and comedic teleplays, and a unique format referred to as the Premiere Filters assignment.

To get things rolling, the instructor frequently proposed specific ideas within the previously mentioned formats. In the news events category, we have seen many versions of the Tempe Balloon Festival (a completely fictitious event). Students conjured up story elements such as the number of hot-air balloons, character sketches, and incident details such as flaming crash disasters. Through the use of special effects and clever editing, the unreal became believable.

The talk show format was also popular with the students. They responded well to themes with which they have had personal viewing experience. One particularly successful production was entitled Too Late with Jay Lamo--a sort of amalgamation of two familiar late night network shows. It included a central character host (Jay Lamo) who greeted the audience with some well and not-so-well received humor after the requisite opening theme music. Next came the Top Ten List which was a product inspired by an Internet derived inventory of more than one hundred ways to kill Barney, the purple dinosaur held in contempt by more than one child in the class. Following a commercial break came an interview with an athlete from the Bungee Olympics. His recounting of the maladies that could befall the participants in such sports as bungee bowling and bungee archery held the studio audiences' rapt attention.

Another attempt at art imitating life imitating art was found in Le Monde Surreal, a take-off on MTV's The Real World. In both cases the story was based on the documenting of diverse individuals brought together to share living quarters and the subsequent interpersonal relationships and conflicts that occurred. Le Monde Surreal, which translated as The Surreal World, opened with an expressionistic montage set to rock music. In the montage unconventional camera techniques such as canted angles and shaky camera effects mixed with pixelated images and special colorization effects to contribute to the surreal mood.

The science fiction genre of the 1950s was revisited in The Mutant Cows and the Giant Hand (see Figure 1). Here surreal perspectives were created by placing a normal size hand extremely close to the camera lens in the same shot that framed a distant group of abnormally small characters dancing in a courtyard (see Figure 2). The Giant Hand appeared to be threatening the dancers with pinching motions. The story evolved to disclose that it was all part of a plot by mutant cows to hold the nation hostage with a demand of a hundred billion bales of hay. Somehow the Giant Hand was collaborating with the cows in this treachery. The student director placed the camera at angles to effectively accentuate distortions of size and perspective. The point of view was at times portrayed as that of the Giant Hand during battle with the hero. Experimentation also included the use of a canted camera to suggest that a room inhabited by flailing humans was being tipped by the villains.

Figure 1
THE GIANT HAND

Figure 2
THE GIANT HAND AND DANCERS

A popular project with most student videologists was the creation of a Filters program. The assignment was to compose a self-contained 30-second vignette that portrayed a mood. Requirements included the use of at least three digital video clips supplied from a set of stock footage, the use of a music or sound effects track (again supplied to the student), and the application of one or more filters found in Adobe Premiere. The student editor linked together the clips in a digital video construction window interface and often added other touches such as transitions between clips. The final piece usually proved the adage that the sum was greater than the parts. This project was especially palatable for the timid student who was afraid of making mistakes. The instructor explained during the introduction of this project that there was no right or wrong result-only more pleasing or less pleasing effects. It was entirely up to each individual's sense of aesthetics as to when to pronounce it completed. Often the students worked in teams of two to assist in technical matters or to offer second opinions on what worked.

Internet

The course was designed to help the students become familiar with computers and the Internet. The objectives included (1) creating a word document, (2) sending and reading e-mail, (3) scanning a picture, (4) searching the net, and (5) creating a webpage. Searching the net and creating a webpage provided examples of the article-visual literacy; therefore, the following discussion will focus on these two topics.

Equipment

The hardware used in the class consisted of Power Mac computers and a scanner. Software included MS Word, Netscape, Netscape Gold, and Adobe Photoshop. The students used Netscape to search the net, Netscape Gold to create their webpage, and Adobe Photoshop to edit their images.

Instructional Philosophy and Methods

Like the Videology class, different approaches were employed to teach this class. Behaviorists' methods, as identified by Ertmer and Newby (1993) and Heinich, Molenda, Russell, and Smaldino (1996), facilitated learning. Students first learned the basics of Netscape, including

- viewing the document source
- adding and editing bookmarks
- saving a bookmark file into their disk and importing a bookmark file
- learning features under "Go" and "Options"
- searching the net using different search engines

Then the Constructivists' methods, as identified by Ertmer and Newby (1993), Heinich et. al (1996), and Bagley and Hunter (1992), were employed to instruct the class. The students were encouraged to explore different websites based on their interests. How visual images influenced the children's net search will be reported in the "Observation Finding" section.

After exploring different websites, the students began creating their own webpage. Similarly, Behaviorists' methods were first used, and Constructivists' methods were employed afterwards. The students were introduced to the basics of Netscape Gold:

- using the edit mode
- inserting images
- linking files and websites
- saving their HTML files into their disks and viewing the files in a Browser

They practiced those skills. Then they were encouraged to explore features in Netscape Gold, such as putting in a background color and making a table. The students competed with each other to discover the features. Whoever found the answers was awarded a prize and shared his/her answer.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The other students then learned how to, for example, insert a background or table from the winners.

Projects

The students were given a template to create their webpage (see Figure 3). The template guided the students to introduce themselves, their families, friends, schools, and hobbies. The template also directed them to insert images and to link to other websites.

Figure 3
THE WEBPAGE TEMPLATE

Welcome to My Page

Info about yourself

My family:

My Parents

My brothers & sisters

My pets

I go to school at School's name

My friends

My hobbies

My Favorite Web pages are:

Site's Name (blue text) Add additional information about the site here. (black text)

Site's Name (blue text) Add additional information about the site here. (black text)

Site's Name (blue text) Add additional information about the site here. (black text)

Send me e-mail at your_E-Mail_address

After using the template to create a webpage, each student could decide if to use the template webpage as a final project, to modify the template webpage as the project, or to create a new webpage without using the template. The final project was presented in class and the students received comments from their peers.

Observation Findings

The instructor observed the students as they searched the net. It was found that websites providing more visual input attracted the students more. They liked websites with colorful pictures, animations, and music, and tended to explore those websites longer. They also downloaded more images or animations from those websites than other websites.

When the students created their own webpages, they liked to use a variety of colors and animations. The figure below summarizes the number of pictures, animations, and text colors that each student used on his/er web cover page. The number of features on the linked pages was not counted.

Figure 4
THE NUMBER OF PICTURES, ANIMATIONS, AND TEXT COLORS ON STUDENTS' WEBPAGES

	No. of Pictures	No. of Animations	No. of Text Colors
S1	1	2	15
S2	0	2	5
S3	3	0	6
S4	2	1	2
S5	1	2	3
S6	1	7	2
S7	3	1	5
S8	2	3	4
S9	3	2	2
S10	1	3	13
S11	2	11	6
S12	0	1	2

Throughout the semester, the students were observed to master the technical skills and create appealing and original pages with nice backgrounds, animations, and interesting content. Several students returned with additional pictures which were scanned and included in their webpage. Several students modified the template to create more artistically appealing webpages.

During the presentation of each student's final project, classmates commented on the webpage design. Most criticism targeted the use of text

and background colors. Most pride was taken in scanned images and animations.

Conclusion

Videology was a useful tool for developing visual literacy skills, and offered additional benefits within the structure of the course. From a visualization perspective, students learned production rules and methods that produced predictable and effective results. Through production experience and experimentation, the students also learned how sounds enhanced or detracted from a visual. The marked improvement of the students' work over the span of just a few weeks demonstrated vast gains in visual literacy. In one case, the camera angles used in an early production attempt reminded one of poorly framed home movies from a distant perspective. Review of the raw footage during class, instructor, aide, and peer encouragement resulted in student trying again with a better awareness of what the camera work could portray. The outcome was vastly superior to the original attempt, and in the process, the entire class learned the power of video technique.

The Internet was also a good tool for learning. It contained much information and provided good learning resources. It also motivated young learners, especially through the visual features. These classes connected visual imaging strategies, learning theories, such as Behaviorism and Constructivism, and young learners. The outcomes of these courses were the class projects--and more importantly students who better understood their world could show it. The introduction described the technology of television and how society was changed by children exposed to visual images. With today's technology of video and the Internet, children can also interact with visual images. One can only imagine the long term societal impact on such power of learning.

Bibliography

Bagley, D., & Hunter, B. (1992). Restructuring, constructivism, and technology: Forging a new relationship. Educational Technology, (July), 22-27.

Ertmer, P., & Newby, T. (1993). Behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism: Comparing critical features from an instructional design perspective. Performance Improvement Quarterly, 6(4), 50-72.

Fransecky, R. B., & Debes, J. L. (1972). Visual literacy: A way to learning - a way to teach Washington: Association for Educational Communications and Technology, pp. 24 - 25.

Heinich, R., Molenda, M., Russell, J., & Smaldino, S. (1996). Instructional media and technologies for learning. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Mandel, D. (1967). Changing art changing man. New York: Horizon Press.

Messaris, P. (1994). Visual literacy, image, mind & reality. Boulder: Westview Press.

Sava, I. (1981). Emotion and cognition visual art education. Finland: Institute of Education.